

Questions & Answers  
Council on Foreign Relations  
14 November 1977

✓

Q: A journalist the other day had some critical things to say about the Intelligence Community forecasting Soviet grain production. Would you care to share what .....

A: Sure. We missed by some 10 percent on that one if you believe Mr. Brezhnev. But we are pleased that over the last four or five years we have developed this technique for predicting the grain harvest in a <sup>country</sup> that does not let us have enough information to do so adequately and which doesn't share its information despite the impact it has on the world market. I will say that while we were off this time, we want to do better, will try to do better. There are those who say that 10 percent is good enough for government work. Seriously, we'll use that as a way of finding what we did wrong. But I am very pleased that we did, starting with early July predict and let people know that the Soviets were entering the grain market for larger quantities ~~then~~ they were announcing, <sup>whether</sup> whether we ever predicted. And I think that has helped to cushion the impact of this Soviet announcement of their grain harvest. Incidentally, in that regard we have here and in the other room we have cocktails, we have copies for anybody who <sup>would</sup> like it of our study on the Soviet economy. We would be happy for you to take them away.

Q: I noticed Admiral that you deliberately did not mention intelligence operations. The assumption is that then the CIA going to focus specifically on collection and research and take a very sharp line between that and operations yet on the other hand, is the second part of the question, if intelligence operations are deemed necessary or.....assumption is that other agencies of the government would undertake it?

A: No, this is an oversight on my part in the presentation in trying to keep it somewhat brief. Covert action is what we're talking about here and what the Agency has received the greatest number of black eyes for. This is not really intelligence. This is attempting to influence attitudes or events in foreign countries without it being known who is doing the influencing. It is called covert action as apposed to clandestine collection of information which is intelligence. Today, we are going to undertake covert action only if the CIA is authorized by Presidential Directive and this has been in existence for many, many years, ~~to undertake covert action~~. The CIA does not do ~~that~~ <sup>covert action</sup> today on its own. It must obtain approval from the National Security Council, the signature of the President of the United States and I must notify the appropriate committees of the Congress of what we are doing. And we in the Agency don't even feel that it is our responsibility to initiate ~~these~~ <sup>covert action</sup> we want for the policy-makers to tell us they've got problems in certain areas and they want to see if there is something that can be done. We will then produce our estimate of what can be done. So I

would say to you that covert action today is under very tight control. We can not dispense with this capability, ~~although~~ it's used quite infrequently today. But who knows where we are going to be in the future and we must have that in our bag of tricks to be available for the appropriate use under these authorities.

Q: How does that apply to the use of college teachers, university personnel, in collection information?

A: We do not in any way want to undermine the American academic community. Either by ~~in any way~~ influencing their teaching responsibilities or smearing their reputations. At the same time, it would be a disaster to cut off American academia from American intelligence. The amount of help they can give us in a constructive and healthy way is just too great. We do not use the status of a man as an academic as a way of using that <sup>status</sup> for covert ~~for~~ intelligence purposes. Because we think that would be undermining. We do not have contractual relationships with American universities that are not known to the administration of that university. We are trying to tread the fine line here between letting these people make a very important contribution and not in any way undermining them.

Q: General Keegan addressed this group about half year ago and criticized the CIA in interpretations of Soviet strike force capabilities and Soviet military intention. He expressed development of new ABM technology, the continued development of civil defense operations and Soviet/Russian employment of very sizeable long range ICBMs and so called interpretations was of course the Soviets are quite interested in the possibility of

\_\_\_\_\_ against the United States. He tends to view the CIA as unwilling to recognize the true danger that we face from Soviet \_\_\_\_\_. I don't myself particularly agree with the estimate, I'm not expert on these things. What is the current wisdom in CIA \_\_\_\_\_ and the Intelligence Community concerning the meaning of Soviet military \_\_\_\_\_, the intentions behind the \_\_\_\_\_.

A: Dividing intentions in something like this is obviously very difficult and Keegan has been a minority in his interpretation of Soviet intentions for some time. I may have been brain washed in the nine months I've been in this job but I don't agree with General Keegan's interpretation and I don't think I've <sup>ve been</sup> ~~as~~ <sup>by</sup> took ~~of~~ the CIA in <sup>for</sup> period of time. I believe the Soviet Union, as I said in my talk, is not able to compete with us economically or even politically and therefore they've had one area in which they could attempt to compete. And they put that emphasis on the military and their hope is to use that military position for political leverage. Use that as pressure on the rest of the world. We simply can not and have no reason to let them do that. I see no prospect in my mind that the Soviet leaders today or any where in the near future can possibly believe that they can conduct a first strike nuclear attack upon the United States and survive without a tremendous level of damage to their own country.

Q: Admiral Turner, I liked to ask a question about recruitment of trained people in the CIA. Heard some stories in the past about morale problems (1) are you satisfied with the quality of the trained people you are presently able to recruit to CIA \_\_\_\_\_ activities; (2) are there any changes in the new policies coming up in the future say more attention to give people a profession \_\_\_\_\_

A: On the latter yes, we are trying to get out much more. I don't believe we've turned down an invitation to a professional society association since I've been there at least. We want to get out and be seen. Now we have some problems with those people who are under cover and can't disclose their position, and that leads us into the very delicate situation <sup>where</sup> you go into a situation like a political science major or something like that under cover. But recruiting is still good. We think we are getting top quality young people from the American academic campuses. Perhaps the greatest emphasis I am trying to give to the Agency today is a greater awareness of the importance and necessity of making the Agency attractive to young people and giving them an opportunity to progress in it so that they will feel that its a viable career. If we do not do that, we're not going to have the same dedicated high quality people ten or fifteen years from now that we do today. And we do have them today. I've been critized in the press for the 800 man cut I've just taken, begun to take in the Agency. But let me tell you very candidly we are reducing 800 positions and I'm eliminating 1200 people. ~~instead~~ The other 400 spaces open up promotion opportunities. And the Agency has not been doing that well enough in the past. We've got to have a flow-through opportunity

-6-

for the young hard charging capable people that we have today <sup>or they</sup> are not going to stay with us. It's a different breed of cats and <sup>there are</sup> ~~their~~ wonderful. But you've got to give them a decent chance.

Q: Admiral, I think it is one of the strengths of the CIA in the past to have a close working relationship with the Intelligence Community and the intelligence community of friendly foreign governments and I'm lead to believe that some of this new American            has created problems with those relationships. Would you comment on that?

A: I don't believe that's the case with respect to deliberate openness. But when it comes to the openness we've had by disclosures of classssified information, disclosures of relationships we've had and disclosures of the names of our agents and so by disaffected people. People who believe sincerely that any American, we've got to assume that because they're only acting as any American, can declassify information if they happen to think it's in the national interest to do so. And I say to you that that's a misguided, misinformed attitude and that we can not tolerate that in the future and we will use those liaison relationships which are very important to us if we cannot hold our truly secure information secure. But that's why as I say I want to get rid of <sup>the</sup> security label on that information which does not need to be kept secure.

Q: Admiral Turner, I'm talking off the record sir, can you discuss the information in the Helms' case with regard to \_\_\_\_\_ and also I might ask if you could tell us whether you personally tried to protect him from inditement?

A: Yes, I'd be happy to address those questions. My involvement in the Helms' case was limited to providing to the Attorney General my attestation of the risk to the country of releasing the information which I anticipated would have to be released through the process of a trial of Mr. Helms and I never knew whether he was going to be prosecuted or not. I stood totally aloft from the process of deciding what should be done to Mr. Helms. Because I felt that was not my role to weigh the risks of intelligence disclosure against benefits to the country, you ~~having well~~ preserved. I <sup>I have these records</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ to the actions to the solution which was obtained. The first, I as a public servant have <sup>been</sup> clearly, forcibly <sup>co</sup> reminded that neither I nor any other officers in the Intelligence Community is above the law or entitled to lie. My second, reaction is that I am very relieved that the country does not have to accept the risk of disclosing a great deal of highly classified information in order to prosecute.

Q: On the collection of intelligence side there has been speculation in the press that in these days of satellites high speed photograph, that the role of the human being is becoming <sup>of</sup> less and less importance, are we reaching the end of the day of the spy \_\_\_\_\_?

A: Absolutely not. That's the short answer, if you want the long one I'll go on. Very seriously, there are kinds of information that aren't obtained by other means. You'll have spies at Jericho and you'll have spies long after you

and I have <sup>5</sup>past~~ed~~ from the scene. Now I will say this, there is no question that you will adapt the use of the spy to the changing environment for collecting intelligence information. And we find, and I don't like words like this, a real sinisterism here. We find that when you take other sources of new kinds of intelligence and you ~~me~~<sup>d</sup> them with a spy you direct your spy in different ways and you tell him find out something which we then can find out better by some other techniques or you find something with some other technique and say now here's <sup>where</sup> ~~what~~ we want to direct your spy. But it is ~~truly~~<sup>absolutely</sup> an essential arrow in our quiver of our intelligence capability.

Q: In view of the ~~recent~~ increased trans-national terroristic activities, what is the role of the CIA in collaboration with other intelligence agencies abroad and in the United States \_\_\_\_\_?

A: Our task is strictly related to foreign intelligence and we put a very considerable effort today on watching intelligence about terrorism. We have played an active role in almost every terrorist event that has taken place as far as assisting other governments who are handling it. And providing them what information we have been able to glean on it, ~~and~~ there is a very cooperative atmosphere and one of very encouraging signs ~~out of this terrible thing of terrorism~~ there is collaboration between countries, ~~and~~ We are trying to combat it. We are doing our best to tap into it and I can assure you that we have prevented

some of the terrorists operations as a result of having advance information.

Q: Admiral, I'm interested in your views about how the Central Intelligence Agency operates in embassies overseas whether you have adopted any new policies with respect to \_\_\_\_\_ ambassadors \_\_\_\_\_?

A: We are a full member of the ambassador's team and I have made it clear to my people that I want them to share every bit of information they can with the American ambassador. Now, I am required by statute to protect our sources and methods of collecting intelligence and therefore there are limits to what we can tell many people. But we are today opening up more classified bases with our ambassadors. We are trying more to be a real part of their team. I think part of the flavor I've been giving you today is that I really feel dedicated and directed by the President to develop a team effort of this entire Intelligence Community of which the ambassadors wouldn't like to be call<sup>ed</sup> a part of ~~it~~ because they are not into intelligence but yet they are major consumers and they are also major contributors.

Q: Admiral, Who studied the Chinese situation? Recently the Chinese seemed to be warming up to the Russians and \_\_\_\_\_ is because of our national policy on SALT and \_\_\_\_\_ Can you add any insight or any comment on it?

A: Yes, we've seen some steps of greater amicability with the Chinese and the Soviets. But I have not seen anything \_\_\_\_\_ towards any major shifts in that direction.

Q: Admiral, there are many separate \_\_\_\_\_  
Could you comment on those tendencies evolving in the  
Soviet Union which has so many minority groups?

A: I don't think there is any question in minority problem  
is going to with and perhaps grow in the Soviet Union  
with the populations of some of their minorities  
are growing at a much greater rate than the ethnic  
Russians. But I don't have much doubt that the  
suppressive measures are there and will be utilized  
in whatever degree is necessary to keep that under  
control as they have been able to willing their  
satellites I think they would do so without any  
question at home. It will be a long time before  
that gets out of control in the Soviet Union.

Q: The Oversight function seems to me in part at least  
to be \_\_\_\_\_ to the Intelligence function, I wonder  
therefore if this device has been used in other democracies  
particularly the UK and France and how it has work  
if at all there?

A: In the UK for instance, it's not as prominent but it  
exists in difference ways. Back to the question about  
ambassadors, the ambassador traditionally had much more  
influence over intelligence operations than the United  
States. That was a form of control that we haven't  
exercised in that direction. We're moving much more  
in that way now. Generally speaking though there are  
less controls in France than in Great Britian. I would  
predict to you sir that they will climbing on the ban wagon  
and won't be far behind \_\_\_\_\_. If you go to Great

Britian \_\_\_\_\_ around town that they are moving and concerned about the same thing. I think we are out front and going to stay there but I think we can do this \_\_\_\_\_ as I've said \_\_\_\_\_ our effectiveness beyond what I've think an acceptable level.

Q: Admiral, along the same lines as the prior question about terrorist groups, cooperation among the super powers \_\_\_\_\_ how do you describe the level of \_\_\_\_\_ is there a good deal of cooperation between US and other countries?

A: I think \_\_\_\_\_ some countries are well down the track on developing reprocessing facilities for instance which will permit you to take uranium that was spent in power generating reactors and turn it into plutonium that can be used in weapons. Many of them are reluctant to foresake the economic benefits that come from that In addition to the great suspicion around the world about the major powers having a complete \_\_\_\_\_ not only on the weapons business but on the general nuclear energy business and therefore many countries feel that they must develop a total cycle of energy and nuclear energy capability including the reprocessing capability and this opens up the prospects of nuclear proliferation. I believe that in recent months as a result of our country's emphasis on it there is greater awareness of it. I don't say that I think there's a great deal of direct collaboration for this. You know we have a major two year study going on right

now in international fuel cycle. We hope out of that we will begin to generate greater awareness and collaboration. It's not great at the moment.

Q: Oil is such an international interest now, what part do you play\_\_\_\_\_?

A: We try to play a very active role. We feel its our responsibility to keep our policy-makers posted on what direction energy production in the world is taking. We think it's our role to try to predict what the price structure is going to be. What the OPEC meeting in December will produce in the way of a change in pricing policy of the OPEC countries. And we have some of the best energy analysts of the government in our organization. Mr. Schlesinger just <sup>stole</sup>~~stole~~ one of them and we try very much to keep people abreast of this and when we can't as we did last March again in May we make our study on this available to the public.

Q: Admiral, what is the term of office for the Director CIA?

A: He stays as long as he can survive, I think. There is no set term for the Director of the CIA. We are developing in the Congress, with the collaboration of the Administration charters for all the Intelligence agencies to spell out in greater <sup>deal</sup>~~deal~~ what we may do, what <sup>we</sup>~~can't~~ do and how we're suppose<sup>d</sup> to do it and there have been proposals in that the term of the office of the Director of the CIA be established by statute certainly a maximum set on it I don't think you could set a minimum. Which is perfectly fine with me. I think people talk differently in terms

of 6 or 8 years or 4 or 6 years with one renewal there are different ways. But today there is no regulation.

Q: There has been alot of discussion about NATO, where it is going and what it's future might be. Would you comment on it?

A: It is a very simple question which only take a half hour to answer. I just came from being <sup>a</sup>in NATO Commander. I think NATO is basicly healthy. I think it has problems that must be attended to very, very definitely like the Southern Plank which I commanded and the terrible problems between Greece and Turkey, Which is making that part of the alliance weak. We must continue by our examples and our exhortation to ~~remind them that they cannot let their~~, I'm sorry, to remind all of NATO that they must continue adequate investment in their military posture in order to maintain that political resolve against the very substantially growing conventional threat that it posed against them & East Germany. I believe they are aware of that and they are coming along. Every country has it's own political and economic problems. But I think the degree of cooperation, recognition of the importance of NATO is just as high today as it has ever been in it's history.